Pakistani Military Ruler's call for strategic self restraint

558. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistani military ruler made a call to India to agree to a strategic self restraint;

(b) if so, what are the main contents of the call made by him; and

(c) whether any talks are proposed to be held between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) On 13th June 2000, Pakistan suggested through an official statement that India and Pakistan adhere to a "strategic restraint regime for avoidance of an arms race, nuclear and conventional, and confidence building in the region on a reciprocal basis". The statement was issued on the eve of resumption of Pakistan's dialogue with the US on non-proliferation after a long gap.

(c) No, Sir.

Visit to Sri Lanka

559. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Sri Lanka recently in the context of continued Jaffna siege by LTTE and following the killing of the Sri Lanka leader C.V. Gooneratne by an LTTE human bomb;

(b) if so, whether he carried any specific message from the Prime Minister, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether he discussed with Sri Lankan Government the question of devolution of powers to Tamils; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The Minister of External Affairs visited Sri Lanka from June 11-12-2000.

(b) The Minister of External Affairs carried a letter from the Prime Minister addressed to the President of Sri Lanka, conveying Government of India's policy on the situation in Sri Lanka.

(c) The Minister of External Affairs held discussions with the Sri Lanka President and the Foreign Minister. He also met the Leader of the Opposition and several other political leaders. The discussions touched on the current situation in Sri Lanka, including ongoing consultations on the devolution of powers and also on broader issues related to the further strengthening of the existing close and friendly relations that India and Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed.

(d) The outcome of the visit is reflected in the Joint Statement issued at the end of the visit, a copy of which is appended.

Sri Lanka-India Joint Statement
(June 12, 2000)

The Minister of External Affairs of India, Shri Jaswant Singh made an offical visit to Sri Lanka, at the invitation of the Government of Sri Lanka, from 11th to 12th June. During his visit the Minister had discussions with President Kumaratunga and Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar. He also met Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, the Leader of the Opposition and representatives from other political parties.

At the commencement of discussions, the visiting Minister reiterated the continued commitment of the Government of India to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. He also expressed the good wishes and support of the Government of India to the restoration of a lasting peace, which would be possible through a political process that produces a settlement, which meets the aspirations of all communities.

The discussions touched upon the present situation and also the broader issues related to the further strengthening of the existing close and friendly relations that India and Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed.

President Kumaratunga apprised the visiting Minister of current political developments including the consultations between the

Government and other political parties and the facilitation efforts of Norway.

President Kumaratunga welcomed India's offer to be of assistance in the humanitarian as well as economic sphere to ease any constraints that may be currently faced by Sri Lanka. Shri Jaswant Singh added in this regard that India would be prepared to extend to Sri Lanka a credit facility, on terms to be mutually worked out between the two Finance Ministers, amounting to US$ 100 million. The possibilities of Sri Lanka's purchasing wheat, rice and sugar on a counter trade basis from India, were also discussed.

In conclusion both sides noted that the discussions had been productive and that they had enabled the reaching of understandings on the measures that India and Sri Lanka can take both collectively as well as individually, to bring about lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Shri Jaswant Singh emphasised that he was leaving Sri Lanka at the end of his visit confident of the depth, strength and direction of India-Sri Lanka relations and their ability to meet the common challenges both countries face.

Donation of a Hospital to Angola

560. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state whether Government of India would consider to fulfil the words given by former Prime Minister of India, Rajeev Gandhi during his visit to Angola about donating a hospital to Angola as the political as well as security related situation have improved, barring a small and distant sector in Angola?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): At the request of the Angola Government, it has been decided that a factory for making means of locomotion for the disabled will be set up in Angola with the assistance of Government of India. Details are being processed and will be concretized in association with the Angolan side.